



REPRESENTATION REPORT

(SECTION 12(5) - 12(7) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999)



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1. Introduction

Section 12(3) of the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act) indicates that Council must undertake a “representation review” to determine whether the community would benefit from an alteration to Council’s composition and/or ward structure.

Section 12(4) of the Act states: “A review may relate to a specific aspect of the composition of the council, or of the wards of the council, or may relate to those matters generally – but a council must ensure that all aspects of the composition of the council, and the issue of the division, or potential division, of the area of the council into wards, are comprehensively reviewed under this section at least once in each relevant period that is prescribed by the regulations”.

Representation reviews are generally undertaken every eight (8) years, and the Minister for Local Government has specified that the City of Salisbury (Council) is required to undertake and complete a review during the period April 2024 – April 2025.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Sections 12(5) and 12(6) of the Act. It sets out the elector representation proposal that Council believes should be carried into effect at the next Local Government elections in November 2026; provides information pertaining to matters relevant to the composition and structure of Council; and presents an analysis of how Council’s proposal relates to the relevant provisions and principles prescribed under Section 26(1)(c) and Section 33 of the Act.

The key issues that need to be addressed during the review include:

- the number of elected members of Council that are required to provide fair and adequate representation to the community;
- the division of the Council area into wards, or alternatively the abolition of wards; and
- if applicable, the preferred future ward structure, the level of ward representation, and the name of any proposed future wards.

Whilst the proposal presented herein reflects the current position of the Council, no final decision will be made in respect to Council’s future composition and/or structure until consideration has been given to any and all public submissions which may be received during the prescribed public consultation stage.

2. Background

The City of Salisbury covers approximately 158.1 km²; and had an estimated resident population of 149,214 as at the 30th June 2023. According to Electoral Commission SA, there were 98,878 eligible electors within the Council area as at the 24th April 2024, this equating to an elector ratio (i.e. the average number of electors represented by a councillor) of 1:7,063.

The Council area is currently divided into seven (7) wards, as described hereinafter and depicted on Map 1. Each existing ward is represented by two (2) ward councillors (i.e. a total of fourteen (14) ward councillors}, and the Mayor is the fifteenth and principal member of Council.

West Ward: Comprising the suburbs of St Kilda, Bolivar, Globe Derby Park, Dry Creek, Green Fields, Mawson Lakes, Cavan and Pooraka; and portion of the suburb of Waterloo Corner to the west of Port Wakefield Road.

Central Ward: Comprising portion of the suburb of Burton to the south of Waterloo Corner Road; portion of the suburb of Waterloo Corner to the east of Port Wakefield Road; and the suburb of Paralowie with the exception of the part to the east of Whites Road and south of Burton Road.

North Ward: Comprising the suburbs of Edinburgh, Direk, Salisbury North, Salisbury and Elizabeth Vale; and portion of the suburb of Burton to the north of Waterloo Corner Road.

Para Ward: Comprising the suburb of Salisbury Downs; portion of the suburb of Parafield Gardens with the exception of the part to the east of the Salisbury Highway; and portion of the suburb of Paralowie to the east of Whites Road and south of Burton Road.

East Ward: Comprising the suburbs of Salisbury Park, Salisbury Plain, Brahma Lodge and Salisbury Heights; portion of the suburb of Salisbury East to the north of Clayson Road; and portion of the suburb of Gulfview Heights to the north of Wynn Vale Drive.

Hills Ward: Comprising the suburbs of Para Hills, Para Hills West, Parafield and Salisbury South; portion of the suburb of Gulfview Heights to the south of Wynn Vale Drive; portion of the suburb of Parafield Gardens to the east of the Salisbury Highway; and portion of the suburb of Salisbury East to the south of Clayson Road.

South Ward: Comprising the suburbs of Walkley Heights, Valley View, Para Vista and Ingle Farm.

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The current composition and ward structure of Council was adopted at the completion of the previous representation review which was undertaken in 2016/2017. This arrangement formally came into effect at the Local Government elections in November 2018.

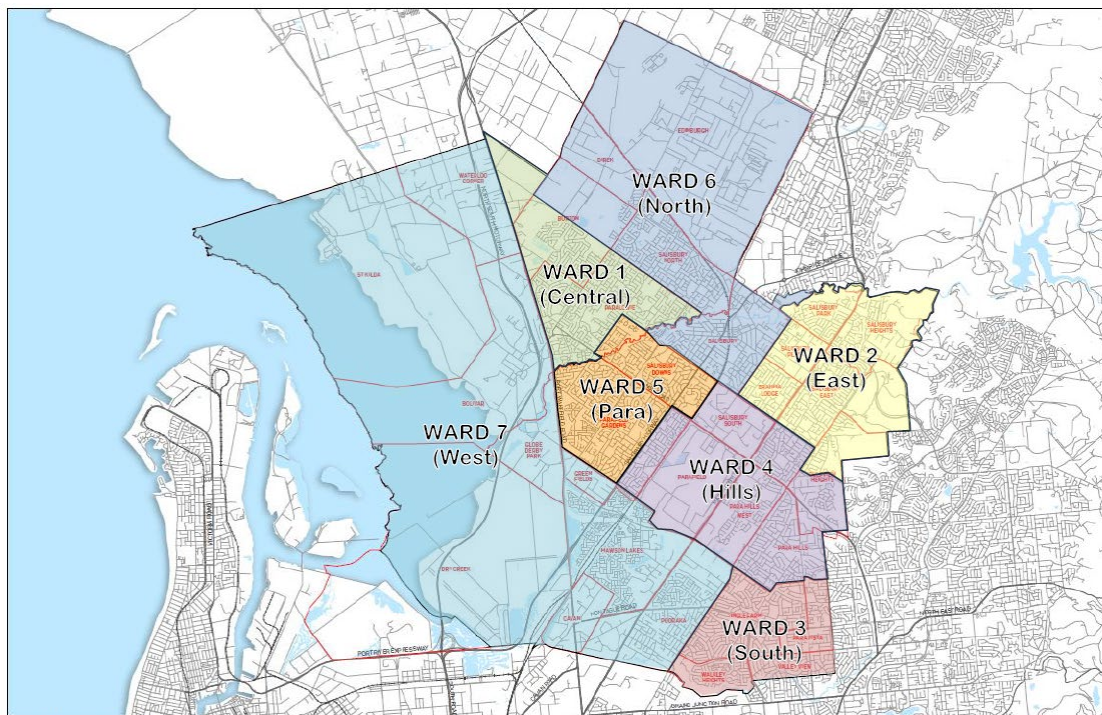
The distribution of electors between the existing wards is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Elector distribution between existing wards.

Ward	Crs	HOA Roll	Council Roll	Electors	Ratio	% Variance
Central	2	14,714	2	14,716	1:7,358	+4.18
East	2	14,040	6	14,046	1:7,023	-0.56
South	2	13,069	14	13,083	1:6,542	-7.38
Hills	2	13,253	5	13,258	1:6,629	-6.14
Para	2	14,666	16	14,682	1:7,341	+3.94
North	2	14,486	17	14,503	1:7,252	+2.67
West	2	14,581	9	14,590	1:7,295	+3.29
Total	14	98,809	69	98,878		
Average					1:7,063	

Source: Electoral Commission SA, 24th April 2024

Map 1: Current ward structure



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Council commenced its current review on the 6th May 2024 with a briefing of the elected members on the key review issues. A second briefing/workshop occurred on the 3rd June 2024, at which time the elected members discussed:

- the “member cap” specified under Section 11A of the Act;
- the continued division of the Council area into wards, as opposed to the abolition of wards;
- the number of elected members required to provide adequate and fair representation; and
- seven (7) ward structure options which demonstrated how the Council area could be divided into wards based on eleven (11), twelve (12) and/or fourteen (14) councillors.

Subsequently, at a meeting on the 24th June 2024, Council considered a Discussion Paper which provided further relevant information and ward structure options. At that time Council identified its preferred future composition and structure, and resolved the required Representation Report be prepared in readiness for the public consultation stage of the review process.

3. Proposal

Having duly considered all relevant provisions of the Act and considerable information pertaining to the primary issues pertaining to the review, Council proposes the following in respect to its future composition and structure.

- The principal member of Council be a Mayor elected by the community (as per the requirements of Section 51 of the Act).
- The future elected body of Council comprise the Mayor and fourteen (14) ward councillors.
- The Council area continue to be divided into seven (7) wards, as per the current ward structure, with each ward being represented by two (2) councillors.

The reasons for Council's "in principle" decisions, together with an analysis of compliance with the relevant provisions and requirements of the Act, are provided hereinafter.

4. Proposal Rationale

4.1 Composition

Section 51 of the Act stipulates that the principal member of Council must be appointed (by the Governor under circumstances prescribed under Section 10 of the Act) or elected as a representative of the area as a whole; and is to be called mayor. The Act no longer affords any alternative.

Section 52(1) of the Act specifies that all members of Council, other than the principal member, shall have the title of councillor.

Section 52(2) states that a councillor will (depending on how the council is constituted):

- be elected by the electors for the area, as a representative of the area as a whole (whether or not the area is divided into wards); or
- if the area is divided into wards, be elected by the electors of a particular ward, as a representative of the ward.

4.2 Wards/No Wards

The Council area has been divided into wards since the City of Salisbury was proclaimed in 1964.

Currently two (2) of the nineteen (19) metropolitan councils (i.e. the Towns of Gawler and Walkerville) have no wards, as do thirty-five (35) of the forty-nine (49) regional councils.

Council acknowledges that the “no wards” alternative affords electors the opportunity to vote for all of the vacant positions on Council; automatically absorbs fluctuations in elector numbers; allows for the most supported candidates from across the Council area to be elected; and supposedly enables the elected members to be free of parochial ward attitudes. Notwithstanding this, Council is concerned that the “no wards” alternative:

- does not guarantee direct representation of all communities within the Council area;
- may make it easier for single interest candidates and/or groups to gain support (than does the existing ward based system);
- has the potential to make the task and expense of contesting "council-wide" elections difficult and excessive; and
- has the potential to increase the cost of conducting elections and supplementary elections, given that under the “no wards” structure all contested elections must be conducted on a "council-wide" basis.

On the other hand, Council believes that a ward structure should:

- guarantee a level of direct representation of all areas and communities within the Council area;
- ensure local interests and/or issues are not overlooked in favour of the bigger “city-wide” picture; and
- provide recognizable lines of communication with Council through the ward councillors.

It is also considered that ward councillors can have empathy for, and an affiliation with, the constituents and communities within their ward; and the existing ward councillors already deliberate and make decisions on the basis of achieving the best outcome for their ward and the whole of the Council area (as would be the role of an area councillor under the “no ward” alternative). Further, the community knows and accepts the division of the Council area into wards, and the structure and level of representation that it provides. As such, the retention of a ward structure will likely be perceived as an indication of stability within Council and Local Government in general.

Given the aforementioned, Council supports the on-going division of the Council area into wards.

As for the proposed retention of the existing ward structure, Council favours this structure for the following reasons.

- The ward structure comprises seven relatively compact wards which will still provide the electors/residents located therein with fervent and direct representation.
- The ward structure:
 - is relatively simple in configuration;
 - is reasonably well balanced in terms of the distribution of electors between the proposed wards and the resulting ward elector ratios;
 - exhibits ward elector ratios which lay within the specified quota tolerance limits (and are therefore capable of sustaining reasonable future fluctuations in elector numbers);
 - has a consistent level of representation (i.e. two councillors) across all of the wards;
 - will provide sufficient opportunities for aspiring candidates to Council (and the individual wards);
 - will provide a level of ward representation which will ensure continued representation within a ward under circumstances whereby a ward councillor is absent or unavailable;
 - should maintain reasonable and manageable workloads for the ward councillors; and

- will provide the same level of ward representation to that which has been provided to, and experienced by, the local community over the past six years.
- The existing/proposed ward structure incorporates relatively small wards (in comparison to some other metropolitan councils) which should continue to provide an environment wherein closer relationships between ward councillors and their constituents can be fostered, and ward councillors can be more familiar with the issues and/or concerns within their ward.
- The existing/proposed wards were established in November 2018 and, as such, have developed identities as individual “communities of interest”.
- In the main the ward boundaries align with long existing suburb boundaries and/or main roads and, as such, should be easily identified and readily accepted by the local community.

Given all of the aforementioned, Council’s preference to retain the existing seven ward structure is considered to be rational and justifiable.

4.3 Number of Councillors

Council has comprised the Mayor and fourteen (14) ward councillors since the Local Government election in 2018.

Section 11A of the Act specifies that a council must not be comprised of more than thirteen (13) members, including the Mayor. However, the Act also allows Council to seek an “exemption certificate” from the Electoral Commissioner if it desires to retain more than the specified maximum number of elected members. These are relatively recent provisions of the Act, having been introduced via the Statutes Amendment (Local Government Review) Bill 2020.

Independent legal advice received from Norman Waterhouse Lawyers suggests that an “exemption certificate” must be granted by the Electoral Commissioner under circumstances whereby Council has given due consideration to the relevant matters contained within the Act. Accordingly, when determining its preferred future composition, Council also gave consideration to the following relevant provisions of the Act.

Section 12(6)(a)(i) requires Council to examine the question of whether the number of members should be reduced. As part of its review Council considered a number of future ward structures based on eleven, twelve and fourteen councillors. Ultimately, Council determined that the current level of representation (i.e. fourteen councillors) provides the most appropriate level of representation for the Council area, despite the intent of Section 11A of the Act. The following is offered in support of Council’s “in principle” decision.

Council is aware that, whilst the councillors are elected to provide representation of (and assistance to) the constituents within their wards, they also act in the best interest of the whole community within the Council area. This includes approximately 50,000 additional residents who are not enrolled to vote but have the same day-to-day concerns and issues which confront the eligible electors throughout the Council area.

Further, another key factor is the expectation of on-going population growth across the Council area in the foreseeable future. Whilst it is difficult to quantify the future growth with any certainty at this time, there are opportunities for further residential development, including a proposed future master planned community in Dry Creek which, according to Plan SA, may realize an additional 10,000 new homes commencing sometime in the next eight years. Overall, the anticipated increase in the future population of the Council area will likely result in greater elector numbers, higher elector ratios and potentially greater workloads for the elected members.

This matter is addressed in more detail later herein (refer 5.2 Population and Demographic Trends, page 11).

Council has also been mindful of the need to:

- ensure that there are sufficient elected members to manage the affairs of Council and afford reasonable opportunities to attract potential future candidates to seek election to Council;
- maintain a suitable level and quality of representation in a growing community;
- provide adequate and readily available lines of communication between Council and the community; and
- ensure that the potential for diversity in the elected member's skill sets, experience and backgrounds is maintained.

Council believes that it is important to maintain the quality and level of representation that has long been experienced and expected by the local community. As such, a reduction in the number of councillors is not proposed at this time, given that it may detrimentally impact upon the quality of representation being provided to the community, and will likely result in increased workloads for the elected members.

5. Legislative Requirements

The provisions of Sections 26(1)(c) and 33 of the Act require Council consider, as far as practicable, the following when developing a proposal that relates to its composition and structure.

Section 26(1)(c) requires that, when considering a reform proposal, Council should have regard to a list of principles, the most relevant being the following.

- Proposed changes should, wherever practicable, benefit ratepayers.
- A council should reflect communities of interest of an economic, recreational, social, regional or other kind, and be consistent with community structures, values, expectations and aspirations.
- Residents should receive adequate and fair representation within the local government system, while over-representation in comparison with councils of a similar size and type should be avoided (at least in the longer term).

Section 33(1) requires that, in the formulation of a proposal that relates to the boundaries of a ward or wards, the review must also take into account, as far as practicable:

- the desirability of reflecting communities of interest of an economic, social, regional or other kind;
- the population of the area, and of each ward affected or envisaged by the proposal;
- the topography of the area, and of each ward affected or envisaged by the proposal;
- the feasibility of communication between electors affected by the proposal and their elected representatives;
- the nature of substantial demographic changes that may occur in the foreseeable future; and
- the need to ensure adequate and fair representation while at the same time avoiding over-representation in comparison to other councils of a similar size and type (at least in the longer term).

Finally, **Section 33(2)** of the Act requires that a proposal which relates to the formation or alteration of wards of a council must observe the principle that the number of electors represented by a councillor must not, as at the relevant date (assuming that the proposal was in operation), vary from the ward quota by more than 10 per cent.

Council's comments, as they relate to the relevant provisions of Sections 26 and 33 of the Act, are as follows.

5.1 Communities of Interest

The Act speaks of the desirability of reflecting communities of interest of an economic, social, regional or other kind.

“Communities of interest” have previously been defined “as aspects of the physical, economic and social systems which are central to the interactions of communities in their living environment”, and are generally identified by considering factors relevant thereto, including neighbourhood communities; history and heritage communities; sporting facilities; community support services; recreation and leisure communities; retail and shopping centres; work communities; industrial and economic development clusters; and environmental and geographic interests.

The Council area covers approximately 158.1 km² and incorporates thirty-three (33) suburbs (or part suburbs). Council is keen to ensure that, where possible, identified “communities of interest” are maintained in their entirety within the bounds of a ward, taking into account the features of the landscape and the distribution of the electors. In order to achieve this, Council generally seeks (where possible) to maintain entire suburbs within a ward.

The current ward structure has existed for approximately six years. Whilst six suburbs are divided between wards, the ward structure is known to the community and the wards have developed into individual “communities of interest” which are determined by their long-established boundaries and the communities therein.

Given the aforementioned, it is considered that the proposed retention of the existing ward structure will serve to maintain the perceived/existing communities of interest.

5.2 Population and Demographic Trends

The City of Salisbury is expected to continue to experience further residential development (and therefore population and elector growth) in the foreseeable future.

The following information provides some insight into the demographic trends that have occurred over recent years, and the extent of the anticipated future population increase.

Data sourced from **Electoral Commission SA** indicates that the number of electors within the Council area increased at varying rates over the period 2003 – 2023. Overall, during the cited period the number of enrolled electors increased by 13,097 or 15.3% (i.e. 85,575 to 98,672).

The **Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure document “Local Area (SA2 and LGA), Population Projections for South Australia, 2021 – 2041”** (published March 2024) indicates that the population of the Council area is anticipated (medium series) to increase by 22,252 people or 15.1% (i.e. 149,775 to 164,107) during the period 2021 – 2041.

Data provided by the **Australian Bureau of Statistics (refer 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia)** indicates that the estimated population of the Council area generally increased from year to year during the period 2001 – 2023; and overall increased by 35,365 people or 31.06% during the specified period (i.e. 113,849 to 149,214). The same data indicates that the population increased by 5,449 people or 3.8% during the five year period 2018 – 2023 (i.e. 143,765 to 149,214).

Australian Bureau of Statistics "Quick Stats" indicate that the estimated population of the Council area increased by 35,130 people or 31.74% over the period 2001 – 2021 (i.e. 110,676 to 145,806).

According to the **City of Salisbury "community profile"**, the estimated resident population of the Council area increased by 17,407 people or 14.35% (i.e. 121,288 to 138,695) during the period 2006 – 2015; and then increased by a further 10,519 people or 7.58% (i.e. 138,695 to 149,214) during the period 2015 – 2023. Overall, this equates to an increase of 27,926 people or 23.02% over the period 2006 – 2023.

Council is also aware of the following.

- The population of the City of Salisbury has experienced a stable increase since 2016.
- According to City of Salisbury Population forecast (id.com.au), the population of the Council area is forecast increase to 155,611 by 2046, this being an increase of only 6,397 residents over 20 years. This indicates the Council's population growth rate in the near future will likely be relatively slow.
- The Council area does not have many significant green fields areas for future development, other than a proposed future master planned community in Dry Creek (West Ward). According to Plan SA (Residential land release and rezoning), the proposal anticipates 10,000 new homes. However, this proposal is still in discussion with the State Government and is likely not to be fully delivered over the next eight years.
- In line with the rest of the state and country, residential building approvals and development activity has slowed down in the City of Salisbury. Natural residential development activity is projected (Residential development, City of Salisbury, Population forecast) or happening in the following suburbs (2021-2046):
 - Salisbury (North Ward), forecasted +644 dwellings
 - Parafield Gardens (Para Ward), forecasted +617 dwellings
 - Salisbury Heights (East Ward), forecasted +503 dwellings
 - Para Vista, Valley View, Walkley Heights (South Ward), forecasted +462 dwellings
 - Ingle Farm (South Ward), forecasted +424 dwellings

- Paralowie (Central Ward), forecasted +377 dwellings
- Metro Parade student accommodation in Mawson Lakes (West Ward), to deliver +228 dwellings over the next few years.
- The City of Salisbury is focusing on encouraging and delivering higher density developments and infill in the following areas:
 - Walkleys Road Corridor development in Ingle Farm (South Ward), to deliver +220 dwellings. Horizon 2-5 years
 - Lake Windermere development in Salisbury North (North Ward), to deliver +35 dwellings. Horizon 2-5 years
 - Salisbury City Centre (North Ward) – in line with the city centre’s revitalisation project for more mixed use developments including residential. This is already zoned as Urban Activity Centre. Horizon 2-10 years
 - Ingle Farm activity centre and surrounds (South Ward) – may include investigation of potential rezoning (currently Suburban Activity Centre zone) to facilitate higher density. Horizon 2-10 years
 - Residential areas between Salisbury Highway and the rail corridor, in Parafield Gardens (Hills Ward) and Salisbury Downs (Para Ward) – may include investigation of potential rezoning (currently General Neighbourhood zone) to facilitate higher density. Horizon 2-10 years. 6.4.7.6 It is reasonable to surmise that the aforementioned identified areas will receive the highest increase in population in the near future, whilst the rest of the Council area remains fairly stable.

5.3 Topography

The City of Salisbury is 158.1km² in area and exhibits a topography that has had minimal influence on urban growth patterns. The terrain of the City is typical of the “Piedmont” region with gently rolling hills, moderate slopes and considerable buildable land. The City exhibits a number of watercourses; an extensive road network; the Parafield Airport; and a railway line which basically dissects the Council area (from north to south).

Despite the above, it is considered that the topography of the City will have little or no impact upon Council’s proposal, given that the proposed ward structure has been developed with the view to ensuring an equitable distribution of electors between the proposed wards; and maintaining entire “communities of interest” (suburbs) within the bounds of the proposed wards (where possible).

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5.4 Feasibility of Communication

Council believes that the mayor and fourteen ward councillors will continue to provide adequate lines of communication between the elected members of Council and the community, taking into consideration the anticipated future growth in elector numbers; the size of the Council area; the nature and density of the urban development within the Council area; the continual advancements in telecommunications and information technology; and the fact that Council has operated effectively over the past six (6) years with the same level of representation.

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(Section 12(5) – 12(7) of the Local Government Act 1999)



5.5 Adequate and Fair Representation

The comparison of representation arrangements between the City of Salisbury and the other metropolitan councils is not necessarily a straightforward exercise, given that no councils are identical in terms of their size (elector numbers and/or area), character, population, topography or communities of interest

Table 2 provides (for comparison purposes) the elector data, elector ratios (i.e. the average number of electors represented by a councillor), and the size/area of the metropolitan councils. The data indicates that the City of Salisbury is the fourth largest metropolitan council in area; has the fourth highest number of elected members; and exhibits the second highest elector numbers and elector ratio.

Council	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio
Walkerville (1.34 km ²)	8	5,849	1: 731
Prospect (7.81 km ²)	8	15,268	1:1,909
Gawler (41.10km ²)	10	20,200	1:2,020
Norwood Payneham & St Peters (15.1 km ²)	13	26,260	1:2,020
Unley (14.29 km ²)	12	27,989	1:2,332
Holdfast Bay (13.72 km ²)	12	28,595	1:2,383
Adelaide Hills (795.1 km ²)	12	30,954	1:2,580
Burnside (27.53 km ²)	12	32,347	1:2,696
West Torrens (37.07 km ²)	14	43,192	1:3,085
Adelaide* (15.57 km ²)	9	30,437	1:3,382
Campbelltown (24.35 km ²)	10	37,184	1:3,718
Mitcham (75.55 km ²)	12	49,516	1:4,126
Playford (344.9 km ²)	15	71,441	1:4,763
Port Adelaide/Enfield (97.0 km ²)	17	90,157	1:5,303
Charles Sturt (52.14 km ²)	16	90,641	1:5,665
Marion (55.5km ²)	12	68,314	1:5,693
Tea Tree Gully 95.2 km ²)	12	74,791	1:6,233
Salisbury (158.1 km²)	14	98,878	1:7,063
Onkaparinga (518.4 km ²)	12	133,756	1:11,146

Source: Electoral Commission SA (24th April 2024)

* City of Adelaide also comprises two (2) "area councillors".

The elector ratio across the Council area is already the second highest in the state. Whilst a reduction in the number of elected members would serve to increase the elector ratio and result in some financial savings (e.g. elected member's allowances), Council believes that the potential detrimental impacts in regard to the level and/or quality of representation, the lines of communication between Council and the community, and the increase in elected member's workloads, are undesirable outcomes.

5.6 Quota

Ward quota is the number of electors within a ward divided by the number of ward councillors, whereas the "elector ratio" for the Council area is the total number of electors divided by the number of councillors (i.e. the Mayor is excluded).

Given the aforementioned, any potential future ward structure must incorporate wards wherein the distribution of electors is equitable, either in terms of numbers (if the wards have equal representation) or elector ratio. Under the latter circumstance, the elector ratio within each ward must be within 10% of the average elector ratio for the Council area. The Act only allows for the 10% quota tolerance limit to be exceeded in the short term if demographic changes predicted by a Federal or State government agency indicate that the ward quota will not be exceeded at the time of the next periodic Local Government election.

It should also be noted that Section 12(24) of the Act specifies that where a council area is divided into wards and the elector ratio of a ward varies from the quota by more than 20%, the council will have to undertake another review within a period specified by the Electoral Commissioner.

As indicated in Table 1 (page 3), the elector ratios in each of the proposed wards lay within the specified quota tolerance limits. However, given the anticipated future residential development (including the expected significant development at Dry Creek), the ward elector ratios (and quota variances) of the wards may adjust favourably over time.

6. Current Public Consultation

In accordance with Section 12(7) of the Act, interested persons are invited to make a written submission to Council in respect to this report, and more specifically the composition and structure that Council proposes to retain at (and beyond) the date of the next Local Government elections in November 2026.

Interested members of the community are invited to make a submission expressing their views on the future composition and structure of Council. Submissions can be made as follows, and will be accepted until Friday 23 August 2024.

- Via Council's Online Engagement Hub (www.yoursay.salisbury.sa.gov.au).
- Written submission addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, PO Box 8, Salisbury 5108.
- Emailed to city@salisbury.sa.gov.au.

Further information regarding the elector representation review can be obtained on Council's website or by contacting Joy O'Keefe-Craig, Team Leader Governance, on telephone 84068222 or email city@salisbury.sa.gov.au.